

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed April 7, 2003, Applicant submits this Amendment concurrently with a Petition for a One-Month Extension of Time.

Claims 7 and 10-21 are pending. Claims 7 and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Holmberg *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 4,447,481) in view of Hanson *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 4,673,324). By this amendment, Claims 7 and 19 have been amended. No new matter has been added by the amendments.

For reasons to be set forth below, it is requested that the rejections be removed and that the claims be allowed to issue.

The Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 7 and 10-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). The Examiner contends that the claims are obvious over United States Patent No. 4,447,481 by Holmberg *et al.* ("Holmberg") in view of United States Patent No. 4,673,324 Hanson *et al.* ("Hanson").

Claims 7 and 19 have been amended to recite, in part, "pulling the uncoupled portion of the silicone band while said plurality of sheets are superimposed so as to uncover the glue or adhesive tape strip and thereby irreversibly bind the two sheets together." Support for this amendment is found throughout the specification, e.g., page 6, lines 4-9 of the specification. This provides the advantage of allowing multiple sheets to be superimposed and adhered together in a single operation, which reduces the total required for the binding process. (See, e.g., page 2, lines 1-3 and 9-11 of the specification.)

Holmberg describes a paper sheet 10 and a protective strip of material 16, which is adhered in a groove 12 of sheet 10 by a ribbon of adhesive 14. As illustrated in Figures


6-7, the ribbon 16 is coextensive with the surface area and the thickness of the paper sheet. Since the ribbon 16 is within the boundaries of each sheet 10 (see, column 3, lines 1-3), this configuration provides no means for accessing the ribbon 16 while another sheet has been superimposed over the ribbon 16. Accordingly, “[t]he manufactured sheets 10a may be quickly and easily attached to an underlying surface by *first* removing the protective strip portion 16a to expose the pressure-sensitive adhesive portion” (see, column 2, lines 52-55, emphasis added). Similarly, Hanson describes a first step of “removal of the liner 18 from narrow band of adhesive 17 for exposing the adhesive,” and subsequently, “[t]he pages are *then* placed against the surface of the sheet 16 which is coated with adhesive along the marginal edge” (see, column 4, lines 44-47, emphasis added).

Neither Holmberg nor Hanson, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest that a silicone band may be removed while the sheets are superimposed, in addition to the recited in amended Claims 7 and 19. Accordingly, Claims 7 and 19 are believed allowable over the proposed combination of Holmberg and Hanson. Claims 20-21 depend from claim 19 and are believed allowable at least for the reason discussed above regarding Claim 19. It is requested that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 be withdrawn.

Conclusion

For all the foregoing reasons, it is requested that all the rejections be withdrawn and that the claims be allowed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,


Lisa B. Kole
PTO Reg. No. 35,225

Walter M. Egbert, III
PTO Reg. No. 37,317

(212) 408-2628
Baker Botts L.L.P.
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112

APPENDIX
CLAIMS MARKED TO SHOW CHANGES

In the claims:

Please amend the Claims 7 and 19 to read as follows:

7. (Four times amended) A method for irreversibly binding a plurality of sheets together, comprising:

(i) superimposing a sheet having an adhesive strip comprising an adhesive element selected from the group consisting of a glue and a two-sided tape, wherein the tape is adhesive on both surfaces, along at least one of its edges, and a silicone material band, releasably placed on said glue or adhesive tape strip and having at least a portion not coupled to said glue or adhesive tape strip, such that the uncoupled portion may be used to grasp the silicone band during its removal over a second sheet;

(ii) grasping the uncoupled portion of the silicone band; and

(iii) pulling the uncoupled portion of the silicone band while said first and second sheets are superimposed so as to uncover the glue or adhesive tape strip and thereby irreversibly bind the two sheets together.

19. (Twice Amended) A method for irreversibly binding sheets together, comprising:

(i) superimposing a plurality of sheets, each having an adhesive strip along at least one of its edges and a silicone material band, releasably placed on said adhesive strip and having a portion uncoupled to the adhesive strip and extending beyond the sheet, such that the adhesive strips of successive sheets are superimposed;

(ii) grasping the uncoupled portion of the silicone bands extending from the successive sheets; and

(iii) pulling the uncoupled portion of the silicone bands while said plurality of sheets are superimposed so as to remove the silicone bands and uncover the adhesive strips,

thereby irreversibly binding successive sheets together.